

**Town of Simsbury**

**Rules & Procedures**  
**For the**  
**Conduct of Town Meetings**

**January 19, 2008**

**Prepared by Joel Mandell, Town Meeting Moderator**

## **INDEX**

1.	Town Meeting Moderator Pre-Meeting Responsibilities	Page 3
2.	Town Meeting Officials	Page 4
3.	Qualification of Voting Citizens at Town Meeting	Page 5
4.	Procedure for the Conduct of the Town Meeting	Page 6
5.	Amendments	Page 8

### **Town Meeting Moderator Pre-Meeting Responsibilities**

1. Prior to any Town Meeting the Town Meeting Moderator (“**Moderator**”) shall be responsible for obtaining full knowledge and understanding of the resolutions, agenda items and questions to be presented to any Town Meeting.
2. The Moderator at his/her discretion may attend any Town of Simsbury (“**Town**”) Board or Commission meeting to enhance his/her understanding of the issues to be presented to any Town Meeting. The First Selectman and the Chairperson of Town Boards and Commissions shall ensure that adequate notice is given to the Moderator of any meetings called to discuss matters relating to any Town Meeting.
3. The First Selectman will review the call of any Town Meeting with the Moderator prior to any release or notice. The Moderator shall be responsible for developing a detailed agenda for all call items. The Moderator has the authority to request that a representative of the Board of Selectmen, Town appointed or elected officials, Town staff and Board and Commission members participate in the presentation of items specified in any Town Meeting call. At a reasonable time prior to a any scheduled Town Meeting the Moderator shall review the agenda with the First Selectman, other Town appointed and elected officials, Town staff and Chairpersons of interested Boards and Commissions.
4. The Moderator shall hold public office hours at a reasonable time prior to a noticed Town Meeting for the purpose of receiving questions from those qualified to vote in any Town Meeting pursuant to the Town of Simsbury Charter (“**Charter**”) Section 501. (“**Voter**”)
5. Questions received shall be forwarded to relevant parties prior to any Town Meeting.
6. The Moderator will coordinate with the First Selectman’s staff to insure that the call of any Town Meeting is prepared and published in accordance with **Section 509** of the Charter.

### **Town Meeting Officials**

1. **The Moderator.** The Moderator shall preside at any Town Meeting. He/she shall have the powers set forth in **Section 508** of the Charter, regulate the proceedings, decide questions of order in accordance with Robert's Rule of Order and shall make public declaration of all votes taken. The Moderator shall be entitled to vote. If any person in attendance at the Town Meeting, after warning from the Moderator, persists in disorderly conduct, the Moderator may request that person to leave any Town Meeting in accordance with **Conn. Gen. Stat. 7-8**. Upon failure to comply with such request the person may be removed in accordance with law.
2. **The Parliamentarian.** The Moderator shall appoint a Parliamentarian and notify the Town Clerk of such appointment at least 24 hours prior to any Town Meeting. In the absence of the Moderator the Parliamentarian shall serve as the Deputy Moderator in accordance with **Section 508 (a)** of the Town Charter.
3. **The Town Clerk.** The Town Clerk shall serve as the Clerk of any Town Meeting. In the absence of the Town Clerk an acting Clerk shall be designated by the Moderator. The Town Clerk shall maintain minutes and record all votes conducted at any Town Meeting. Any monetary vote shall be reported to the Director of Finance and the Chairperson of the Board of Finance.
4. **Additional Deputy Moderators.** The Moderator may appoint Additional Deputy Moderators for the purpose of assisting in the conducting of votes.

### **Qualification of Voting Citizens at any Town Meeting**

1. At each Town Meeting a section shall be designated for Voters and a section shall be designated for non-voting observers.
2. Prior to entering the meeting area each Voter shall register on the voting lists as prepared by the Registrars of Voters and the Assessor.
3. At the completion of each Town Meeting voter registration lists shall be deposited with the Town Clerk. The lists shall be retained in the office of the Town Clerk and be available for inspection in accordance with applicable law.
4. At the commencement of any Town Meeting the Moderator shall inform those present of the right to challenge the right of any individual to vote. Eligibility to vote shall be determined in accordance with **Conn. Gen. Stat. 7-6**. The Moderator or his/her duly appointed representative shall have access during each Town Meeting to the voter list and the Assessor's records in order to determine the eligibility of any person to vote. The Moderator shall have the right to question the eligibility of any person to vote. The decision of the Moderator as to eligibility shall be final.
5. At the commencement of any Town Meeting the Moderator shall warn all persons not eligible to vote to move to the non-voting section of the venue. The Moderator shall also warn individuals present that anyone who in fact votes when he/she is not a Voter may be in violation of **Conn. Gen. Stat. 9-360**.

### **Procedure for the Conduct of the Town Meeting**

1. The Moderator shall call any Town Meeting to order.
2. The Town Meeting may be opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, the National Anthem or such other appropriate ceremony as the Moderator directs.
3. If the Town Clerk is not present to act as Town Meeting Clerk, the Moderator shall appoint an acting clerk who shall be sworn in by the Moderator as follows: "Do you swear that you will faithfully and impartially perform the duties of temporary clerk of the Town Meeting?"
4. The Moderator shall recognize the Parliamentarian.
5. The Moderator shall recognize the Additional Deputy Moderators.
6. The Moderator may recognize distinguished visitors.
7. The Moderator shall state that any Town Meeting shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.
8. The Town Meeting Clerk shall read the call of any Town Meeting.
9. The Town Meeting Moderator shall read each item in the call of any Town Meeting as it is reached in the business of any Town Meeting. If in the opinion of the Moderator an item is unusually long, the Moderator may briefly describe the provisions of the item, unless requested by a Voter to read the full item.
10. The Voters at any Town Meeting may change the order of the items by motion and vote thereon. The Moderator may change the order of the items without Voter approval, provided however, this power shall be exercised only for good cause.
11. Any Voter and non-voter may speak on any item in the call after being recognized by the Moderator. This may be by simple recognition by the Moderator. At any Town Meeting where it is anticipated that many Voters and non-voters desire to speak the Moderator may use speaker recognition slips that will be available from the Additional Deputy Moderators. The Voters and non-voters will be recognized in the order in which the Moderator receives the speaker recognition slips from the Additional Deputy Moderators.
12. When addressing any Town Meeting Voters and non-voters will use microphones that are placed in any Town Meeting venue. Each Voter and non-voter will state his/her name and address. Each Voter and non-voter may speak for up to five (5) minutes on each item as it is called. The Moderator shall have the discretion to allow a Voter or non-voter who represents that he/she is speaking on behalf of a group of Voters to speak for a period of time not to exceed fifteen (15) minutes. If the Voter and non-

voter has used his/her allotted time and desires to speak further on an item, the Moderator will recognize that Voter and non-voter after all other Voters and non-voters desiring to speak on a call item have spoken. The Voter and non-voter may then speak for up to an additional five (5) minutes.

13. The Moderator shall not entertain a Motion to Call the Question for any item until the occurrence of the earlier of: (1) all speakers desiring to speak have in fact spoken or (2) forty-five minutes have elapsed from the call of an item.
14. Method of Voting.
  - a. The Moderator shall determine the method of voting to be used upon a call for a vote on any item at any Town Meeting. In accordance with Conn. Gen. Statutes 7-7 the Moderator shall select from among the following methods:
    - Voice Vote
    - Hand or Standing Vote
    - Secret Written Ballot
  - b. In addition to selecting the initial method of voting upon each question the Moderator may in his own discretion call for a second vote when in his/her opinion the results of the first vote are not possible to be determined. Such second vote may be by the same method of voting as the first vote or by a different method as selected by the Moderator.
  - c. After the Moderator selects the method of voting and prior to the commencement of the vote, upon a motion duly made and seconded and adopted by a majority of the voters present, the method of voting on a question may be selected by the voters from among the alternatives set forth in Section 14 a.
  - d. In the event of a vote other than a voice vote, the Moderator shall direct the Additional Deputy Moderators to count and/or gather the votes. The results of the vote including the number of yes and no votes shall be open to inspection in accordance with law. The Moderator shall determine the result of any vote taken by any method.

### **Amendments**

1. These rules and procedures may be amended at any Town Meeting provided the proposed amendment(s) are submitted to the Moderator in writing in a timely manner to be placed in the call of the Town Meeting in accordance with the Town of Simsbury Charter and the Connecticut General Statutes. No motion to amend these rules and regulations shall be proposed at a Town Meeting unless it is in the call for such Town Meeting.